



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 1118, S.D. 1**  
**Making an Emergency Appropriation to the Department of Health for Hazard Evaluation**  
**and Emergency Response Preparedness**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS LEE, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hearing Date: **March 17, 2015**  
**8:30 A.M.**

Room Number: 325

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$800,000 in general funds.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** this administration  
3 measure, which requests an emergency appropriation of \$800,000 so that it can cover payroll and  
4 administrative expenses for its environmental protection programs and respond to any  
5 unforeseen environmental emergencies, like oil spills, for the remainder of the fiscal year. These  
6 expenses are normally covered by the Department's Environmental Response Revolving Fund  
7 (ERRF), which receives 5 cents of the \$1.05 Barrel Tax that is levied on every barrel of oil  
8 imported into Hawaii, however because of the State's reduced consumption of oil over the last  
9 several years, ERRF revenues have steadily declined by ~5% per year.

10 The ERRF is on a path to drop below zero cash balance before the end of this fiscal year when it  
11 will no longer be able to support the 41 positions within the Department (31 filled positions) that  
12 depend on it for funding. These include positions that respond to oil spills and hazardous  
13 material releases, as well as positions that work on important environmental issues, like State  
14 water quality monitoring, contaminated site remediation, and management of solid and  
15 hazardous waste.

16 The Department has done a number of things to try to sustain the ERRF during this time of  
17 financial crisis, including instituting a hiring freeze and unencumbering contracts, but this has  
18 only succeeded in extending the time until the ERRF reaches zero balance by a few months.  
19 Without adequate ERRF capitalization, the Department will need to begin the process of laying  
20 off program staff as early as April 2015. The ERRF's dangerously low balance also means that

1 there is no reserve money available to fund any Departmental response to environmental  
2 emergencies, like the response that was necessary during the Honolulu Harbor Molasses Spill.

3 In order to remedy this situation, the Department is requesting the one-time Emergency  
4 Appropriation of \$800,000 in this measure and a 10 cent increase in the Department's Barrel Tax  
5 allocation for the ERRF. The Department has also recently received a \$900,000 loan from the  
6 State Treasury. The Emergency Appropriation, Treasury Loan, and 10 cent Barrel Tax  
7 allocation increase will sustain the ERRF until FY 2018, and would help to ensure the  
8 Department's ongoing ability to support ERRF-funded positions while it works on finding a  
9 more viable, long-term source of funding.

10 Supporting this measure will help to ensure the State's ongoing environmental emergency  
11 response capability, as well as maintain vital water monitoring, drinking water, and solid and  
12 hazardous waste program staff.

13 Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

lowen2-Thomas

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2015 10:08 PM  
To: EEPtestimony  
Cc: jamesjtz@aol.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1118 on Mar 17, 2015 08:30AM

**SB1118**

Submitted on: 3/15/2015

Testimony for EEP on Mar 17, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Gauer	Individual	Support	No

Comments: emergency fund to protect the land and health of the people in this time of climate crisis is important.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2015 5:45 PM  
To: EEPtestimony  
Cc: scoleman@surfrider.org  
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1118 on Mar 17, 2015 08:30AM

**LATE**

**SB1118**

Submitted on: 3/16/2015

Testimony for EEP on Mar 17, 2015 08:30AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stuart Coleman	Surfrider Foundation	Support	No

Comments: As the Hawaii Manager of the Surfrider Foundation, I am writing in support of SB1118. This bill would help bring in needed revenues for the Dept. of Health's Emergency Relief Fund, which is running out of funds. Protecting our environment is not only a good investment in the health of our environment but also in the health of our people and economy. While oil prices are low, we need to raise the barrel tax to prepare for future hazards while also weaning us away from our addiction to oil and other fossil fuels. Please support this bill.

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